

Feb 19, 2007
SB 423

GOVERNMENT NATURAL RESOURCES
COMMITTEE NO. 2
DATE 2-19-07
BY SB 423

MONTANA DEMOCRATIC WOMEN'S CAUCUS

60th Montana Legislature
Helena, Montana

Dear Chairman Lind,

On behalf of the Democratic Legislative Women's Caucus, I'd like to offer enthusiastic support for SB423, the Mercury Safety and Protection Act.

The Democratic Women's Caucus is comprised of the 29 Democratic legislators of the House and Senate. Earlier in the session, the Caucus voted on a priority list of legislation. SB423 was the top priority for the Caucus in the category of Environment.

The Democratic Women's Caucus supports SB423 because it offers commonsense protection for women, children, and families from further mercury contamination. You will hear ample testimony here today about the dangers of mercury as a neurotoxin that dangerously affects the health of children and adults alike. You will undoubtedly hear conflicting testimony about where that mercury contamination comes from and how easy or difficult it is to mitigate those sources.

Regardless of the source, there is no question that exposure to mercury is detrimental to human health and that the less of it we have in our environment, the better off we will all be.

SB423 offers consumer protection while taking the needs of industry into account. The legislation asks for restrictions on the sale and distribution of mercury products, but only in those instances where safer alternatives are feasible. The legislation calls for phasing out the disposal of certain mercury-containing waste products, to prevent future contamination from landfills. This is an incredibly inexpensive way to control a large portion of mercury in our environment. By controlling mercury before it comes into the state, we avoid the high costs of mercury exposure and cleanup later.

Mercury contamination is serious business, so are the health affects it causes. SB423 offers a sensible way to begin cleaning up our environment and improving the health of our children. Please give SB423 a due-pass.

On behalf of the Democratic Legislative Women's Caucus,



Senator Carol Williams, Chair